rejoiced over their electoral victories like a revivalist meeting rejoicing over sinners saved from damnation. Their failure arose not from insincerity, nor even from deceitful leadership, but from the confusion of their hopes. Marxists and nonconformist clergymen and pacifists and checkweighmen and Clydeside demagogues could unite in opposition, but how were they to find a basis for common action when, owing to the effectiveness of their opposition, they found themselves in power ?

The confusion of the back benches was inevitably reflected in the Front Bench. 'We always seemed to be just about evenly divided on every issue/ a member of the Cabinet remarked sadly, and described how the Prime Minister presided over their meetings, waving his arms about like a band-conductor, soothing, confusing, insisting that they were just conducting a preliminary general survey, a second-reading debate, that no one committed himself to anything. Thus they proceeded, until it was time to disperse; dispersing, a little uneasy and bewildered, but after all still in office. Mr. Clynes, then Home Secretary, has described in his Autobiography how when he was a little boy he climbed a lamp-post to see Gladstone pass by in an open carriage. 'Little did that small boy think/ he writes, 'that he too in his day would become a Cabinet Minister/ This miracle had happened.

Becoming Cabinet Ministers in itself constituted success. As Johnson said of women preachers, the astonishing thing was that they should have done it at all. They went to and from their offices in Whitehall, enjoyed the respectful attention of door-keepers and permanent officials, delighted their

opponents, and made the more ardent and envious among their followers embittered, by their moderation. All their lives they had been framing resolutions, referring back motions, presiding over committees and conferences. Now they were in office they went on doing the same thing. The technique of parliamentarism had come to be identified with government itself, as a Covent Garden fruit dealer might absentmindedly take his sick wife home a bundle of invoices to refresh her. A motion 'that this House favours a substantial reduction in the unemployment